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## LD Mike Null sets mood with Elation for Motionless in White at Pennhurst Asylum

Designer heightens chilling atmosphere surrounding abandoned institution in rock meets gothic theatre “Deadstream” show

Goth metalcore band Motionless in White performed June 9<sup>th</sup> against the backdrop of the abandoned Pennhurst Asylum in southeast Pennsylvania for Deadstream #2, an atmosphere-filled livestream show lit by Mike Null using Elation [Artiste Picasso™](#), [Dartz 360™](#) and [SixBar 1000™](#) luminaires supplied by Squeek Lights.

Motionless in White are one of the premiere acts in the genre with an explosive sound and captivatingly macabre stage presence. A troubled and abandoned state-run school and hospital, Pennhurst Asylum, a frightening place with a sordid history of suffering and paranormal presences, provided the perfect backdrop for a heavy hitting dose of horror-themed metal. “I feel that if Alice Cooper or Rob Zombie or Marilyn Manson were to know where we shot this they would be very jealous of where we were and what we got to experience,” stated lighting designer Mike Null about the eerie location.



Deadstream #2 - bigger and better

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Null has been with the band for over a year, a stretch that includes a tour as well as the band's first Deadstream, recorded at the Squeek Lights shop in New Jersey last October. Null used Elation Artiste Picasso™ and Dartz 360™ on that show and again turned to the LED moving heads for Deadstream #2. "The first stream planted a seed in their head," he said. "If we can do this again, how can we make it bigger and better?" As the band hails from Scranton, Pennsylvania, the somewhat local and debilitated environs of the Pennhurst Asylum seemed a fitting place to put on a show at the end of a pandemic. For Deadstream #2, Null painted the Asylum building and projected gobos behind the band using eight Artiste Picassos, lined a path along the front of the building with 24 Dartz, and used some 30 SixBar 1000™ linear battens as foot lights. He also lined the yard with Hex Panel IPs from Elation sister company ADJ.

**Three-purpose design**

Null says there were a few boxes that he needed to check regarding the lighting design. "First, this was a live show so we needed firepower and massive looks. Second, was to highlight this special place and create a theatrical and haunted feel, and third was to light for video. We needed something that could satisfy what Chris Motionless [lead singer and main songwriter Chris "Motionless" Cerulli] wants to see from a live concert perspective but also fill the needs that video as well as the environment needed."

**Artiste Picasso**

Versatility was therefore key and the designer needed flexible fixtures that could fulfill all three roles. According to Null, the Artiste Picasso served the biggest role. "They not only lit the building and made it come to life, they also served as band backlight and with the great gobo engine served the needs of Chris's backlight/silhouette lighting moody looks. With its firepower and gobo projections we really highlighted the building and space well while giving Chris the concert arena looks that he wanted."

**Can it do this? Yes!**

A band with the energy and drive of Motionless in White gives Null ample opportunity to access a lighting fixture's feature set and for Deadstream #2 he thoroughly explored the Picasso's dual gobo wheels and 360° bi-directional animation wheel. "Chris is always very hands on with how the show looks

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no matter if it's a tour or a livestream," he comments. "He's always very involved with what he wants to see which is why these fixtures did so well. I went through the gobo wheels and animation with him and we handpicked what to use. They served their purpose very well. In fact, we never found a gobo that couldn't serve a purpose."

Chris often laid the groundwork and Null then got to be creative inside that. As LD, he interpreted if the idea would or would not look good on video, or sometimes accessed a different parameter of the fixture that might do a better job to achieve the look he was asking for. "Having that versatility, especially working with someone who is so involved in the lighting design, was very much needed. It was essential to have a light that when asked 'can it do this' you can say 'yes.' There was never an image that he had in mind that we couldn't achieve in the lighting design."

With respect to the third box to check, lighting for video, Null says the Picasso's did very well on camera. "They were very punchy, there was no flicker, and the gobo projections on the façade from 75 feet away were still bright as day. We were all very blown away with the firepower, especially having a full lightshow between the lights and the building to cut through."



### **Dartz**

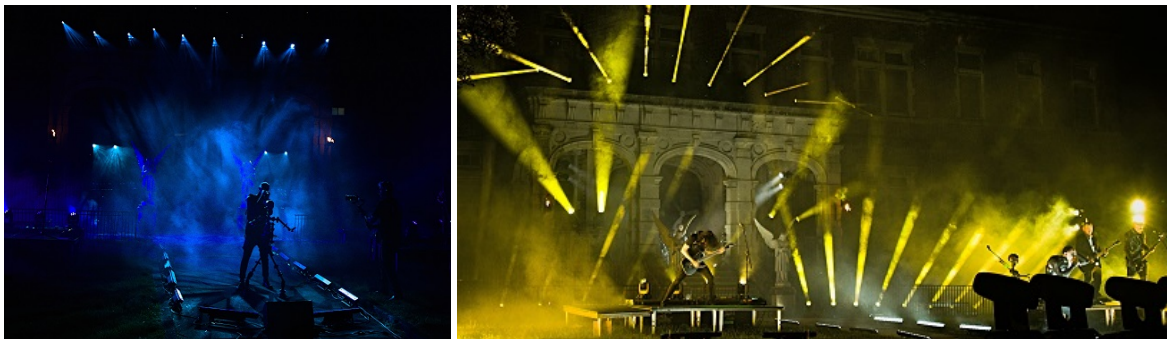
Lining a pathway between the courtyard and the Asylum building itself was a line of 24 compact Dartz 360 LED moving heads, 12 fixtures per side. Null used them for eye candy for a good part of the show and created a virtual wall of mid-air beams that provided the arena look. He comments: "As much as I like fixtures to move they don't need to move all the time and that's something that Chris agrees with me on. With the Dartz, we created these massive backline wall looks or created gaps, designs that emphasized big or small parts of a song and complemented what other fixture groupings were doing. We could create a wall behind the artist and fill this box for them and have it look massive. When these massive arena looks come in from the power of these beams it's very apparent what part of the song you're in or how heavy a song is."

Color choice was also an area that the lead singer had definite requests on, says Null. "One of the biggest things that Chris noticed was the color mixing with the Dartz. When he wanted to set a scene or

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color, they did it quickly. We could apply effects and you couldn't see what colors were in between, only the colors you want. I loved frosting the Dartz and keeping them in Congo or a UV glow and still being able to use his song colors with other fixtures. I could use the Picassos to project the main color that he wanted to see and have the cutting glow of subtle or complementary colors from the Dartz.”

One of Null's favorite songs to design looks for is “Thoughts and Prayers,” a heavy-driving metal song with a fast break down. “Between the entire song with its massive choruses, driving lyrics and a heavy breakdown you can give a light a workout with that song and almost use every parameter. That's one song I like to pull out all the stops on.”



Lined up as footlights, Null incorporated 30 SixBar 1000 six-color LED battens for front light throughout the set - the drummer, pathways, risers, and Chris's catwalk. The Hex Panel IPs from ADJ were used as sidelights and strobes.

### **Squeek Lights**

Null has worked with Victor Zeiser, Managing Partner at Squeek Lights, for over a year and appreciates the dedication and professionalism the lighting supplier comes with. “Victor and his team took 100% care of us. His whole crew made us feel like we were more than taken care of and every Squeek employee on the job went above and beyond from loading in to loading out until four in the morning.”

Like Deadstream #1, Deadstream #2 was a hit with fans who got to see a special show from an out-of-the-ordinary setting. For Null, the chance to gather and work again with a group of industry friends was exceptionally rewarding. He concludes, “To be able to do something this big in Covid, with a band from Pennsylvania, lighting crew from NY, people from different states, it was the most heartwarming feeling. The band too went above and beyond to make sure everyone was accommodated, which speaks a lot about who the band is and how they treat people. Everyone involved in this project is what made it a success.”

Photos: Steve Kosiba/Squeek Lights

### **About Elation Professional**

Based in California with facilities in Florida and Mexico City, as well as European offices in The Netherlands, Elation designs and manufactures a comprehensive range of innovative lighting products known for its superior performance, excellent efficiency, and outstanding price: value ratio, all backed by a hard-earned reputation for Total Support. Elation also offers an advanced line of lighting control products through Obsidian Control Systems,



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as well as a full range of dependable specialty effects called Magmatic. Our mission has always been simple: to provide best-in-class products and service while offering the best value:performance ratio in the industry. Elation products continue to be a part of the industry's most exciting projects across the globe. We invite you to take a closer look at [www.elationlighting.com](http://www.elationlighting.com)

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